Purcell

The Fairy Queen

1692

McCREESH

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Wordbook: adaptation of William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, with additional song texts.
Author anonymous; possibly Thomas Betterton. Spelling and capitalisation partially modernised.

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Purcell
The Fairy Queen
1692
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PAUL MCCREESH

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CHARLES DANIELS *High Tenor / Tenor*
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GABRIELI CONSORT
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PAUL MCCREESH *Conductor*

CD I – *69.28*

THE FAIRY QUEEN

FIRST MUSIC

1 PRELUDE *1.41*

2 HORNPIPE *1.01*

SECOND MUSIC

3 AIR *1.22*

4 RONDEAU *1.36*

OVERTURE

5 OVERTURE *1.32*

ACT I

6 PRELUDE & SONG [CS RW] *2.43*
Come, let us leave the town

7 SCENE OF THE DRUNKEN POET
SONGS *Two Fairies & Poet* [RP ML AR] & CHORUS *6.18*
Fill up the bowl / Trip it, trip it / Enough, enough / About him go /
Hold, you damn'd tormenting punk / I'm drunk, as I live boys /
Pinch him for his crimes / I confess, I'm very poor / Drive 'im hence

8 FIRST ACT TUNE – Jig *1.08*

ACT II

9 PRELUDE & SONG [JW] *2.09*
Come all ye songsters

10 SYMPHONY IN IMITATION OF BIRDS *1.17*

11 SONG [JB JW RW] *1.18*
May the God of Wit inspire

12 SYMPHONY IN IMITATION OF AN ECHO *1.52*

13 CHORUS *0.33*
Now join your warbling voices all

14 SONG *Fairy* [RP], CHORUS & DANCE *2.11*
Sing while we trip it

15 PRELUDE & SONG *Night* [CS] *5.06*
See, even Night herself is here

16 SONG *Mystery* [AD] *1.38*
I am come to lock all fast

17 PRELUDE & SONG *Secrecy* [JB] *2.26*
One charming night

18 SONG *Sleep* [AR] & CHORUS *4.15*
Hush, no more

19 DANCE FOR THE FOLLOWERS OF NIGHT *1.40*

20 SECOND ACT TUNE – Air *1.35*

ACT III

21 PRELUDE, SONG *Nymph & Fawn* [AD JW] & CHORUS *5.23*
If love's a sweet passion

22 SYMPHONY WHILE THE SWANS COME FORWARD *2.22*

23 DANCE FOR THE FAIRIES *0.42*

24 DANCE FOR THE GREEN MEN *1.39*

25 SONG *Nymph* [CS] *5.37*
Ye gentle spirits of the air

26 PRELUDE & DIALOGUE *Coridon & Mopsa* [CD AR] *3.49*
Now the maids and the men are making of hay

27 DANCE FOR THE HAYMAKERS *0.54*

28 PRELUDE & SONG *Nymph* [ML] *2.30*
When I have often heard young maids complaining

29 SONG [JB] & CHORUS *2.03*
A thousand, thousand ways

30 THIRD ACT TUNE – Hornpipe *1.08*

ACT IV

1 SYMPHONY *6.12* CD 2 – *69.35*
Prelude / Canzona / Largo / Allegro / Adagio / Allegro

2 SONG *1st Attendant* [CS] & CHORUS *2.04*
Now the night is chas'd away

3 SONG *2nd & 3rd Attendants* [JB JW] *1.16*
Let the fifes and the clarions

4 SYMPHONY FOR THE ENTRY OF PHOEBUS *0.33*

5 PRELUDE & SONG *Phoebus* [CD] *2.52*
When a cruel long winter

6 CHORUS *2.01*
Hail! Great parent of us all

7 PRELUDE & SONG *Spring* [RP] *2.00*
Thus the ever grateful Spring

8 PRELUDE & SONG *Summer* [JB] *1.48*
Here's the Summer

9 PRELUDE & SONG *Autumn* [JW] *3.15*
See my many colour'd fields

10 SONG W*inter* [RW] *2.38*
Next, Winter comes slowly

11 CHORUS *2.05*
Hail! Great parent of us all

12 FOURTH ACT TUNE – Air *1.15*

INTERLUDE 13 THE PLAINT [CS] *7.52*
O let me weep

ACT V 14 PRELUDE & SONG *Juno* [AD] *4.10*
Thrice happy lovers

15 ENTRY DANCE *1.25*

16 SYMPHONY *1.05*

17 SONG *Chinese Man* [JB] *4.50*
Thus the gloomy world

18 PRELUDE, SONG *Chinese Woman* [RP] & CHORUS *1.16*
Thus happy and free

19 SONG *Chinese Man* [JW] *2.38*
Yes, Daphne

20 DANCE FOR THE MONKEYS *1.01*

21 SONG *2nd Woman* [AD] *2.07*
Hark how all things with one sound rejoice

22 SONG *1st Woman* [ML] & CHORUS *2.27*
Hark the echoing air a triumph sings

23 SONG *1st & 2nd Women* & CHORUS [ML AD] *3.01*
Sure the dull God of Marriage / Hymen appear

24 PRELUDE AS HYMEN ENTERS *0.47*

25 SONG *Hymen & 1st & 2nd Women* [RW ML AD] *4.07*
See, I obey / Turn then thine eyes / My torch, indeed

26 SONG *1st & 2nd Women & Hymen* [ML AD RW] & CHORUS *2.10*
They shall be as happy as they're fair

27 DANCE FOR CHINESE MAN & WOMAN – Chaconne *2.40*

A COMPLEX THEATRICAL ECONOMY

In early 17th-century England, all-sung opera as developed in Italy was admired and appreciated by a cultured minority, but not considered suitable for wholesale import. James I and then Charles I sponsored a series of court masques, Italianate in their scenic splendour (unsurprising in that masque supremo Inigo Jones copied most of his designs from Italian prints) but with music subject to a wide range of stylistic influences: some scenes were spoken and others sung. The masques served a blatant political purpose, glorifying members of the royal family and portraying them as pillars of moral, political and cultural stability on which the whole nation depended. They entertained a socially exclusive audience and offered nothing to the wider public. Indeed, lavish court expenditure on such self-serving pleasures, especially under Charles I, bred political resentment and hastened the slide toward civil war.

On the death of Ben Jonson, William Davenant became Charles I's principal masque scriptwriter and saw the potential for commercial exploitation of masque-derived theatrical ideas. He applied for a licence to open London's first ever masque theatre in 1639 but had to wait another 20 years to get his project properly off the ground. He fought in the civil war (on the royalist side naturally, which later earned him a knighthood), spent some time exiled in Paris and some in prison in the Tower of London, before obtaining a pardon from the Cromwell government and resuming his place in London society. From 1656 Davenant presented a series of masque-like stage entertainments in his London home and made one brave attempt to put on an all-sung English opera (*The Siege of Rhodes*).

Public play performances had been banned under Cromwell, but Davenant's musical interests kept him just about on the right side of the law.

Public theatres re-opened in 1660, straight after Charles II's restoration to the throne. Davenant's long-stalled programme of masque popularisation could resume. He obtained one of two theatre operating licences granted by the new king and launched an aggressive audience development campaign aiming to topple his rival, Thomas Killigrew. Davenant's 'Duke's Company' (patron the Duke of York, later James II) and Killigrew's 'King's Company' were in direct competition with each other. Both installed scene-shifting machinery of the sort developed by Inigo Jones decades before. Both employed actresses – first seen on the English professional stage in 1660. Both hired musicians. Both set out to entertain above all: to blend acting, singing, dancing, spectacle and sexual titillation in an appealing mix, providing something for everyone. Plays were supplied with more music than usual and, when more elaborately produced, were marketed as operas. The labels 'semi-opera' or 'dramatick opera' served when critics felt the need to distinguish English masque-like opera from other varieties.

Different sections of the audience had different priorities, no doubt. Some, as Roger North said later, 'come for the play and hate the music; others come only for the music, and the drama is a penance to them; and scarce any are well reconciled to both'. Among the music fanciers, some preferred vocal numbers brought to life by characterful, if not always (according to North) very accurate performers, and some preferred instrumental pieces. Through to the end of the 17th century the theatre doubled as a concert hall. Yet others went along for purposes unconnected with art – to pick up women and escape into the night before stewards came round to collect their ticket money. Merchandising opportunities were exploited to the full. The orange-sellers paid for permits. Prostitutes paid for admission at a specially discounted rate. Publishers of play texts, opera wordbooks and printed music paid authors and composers for copies of their latest work. It was a complex, highly interdependent economy run without benefit of French-style subsidy. English theatre managers kept lobbying for government handouts, but government never seemed to respond.

Davenant himself died in 1668. His widow inherited the company and sensibly entrusted day-to-day management to two of its leading actors – Thomas Betterton and Henry Harris. Betterton possessed an entrepreneurial flair worthy of the founder. He was a highly cultivated man with a wide circle of influential friends, and a great lover of books, collecting hundreds on all sorts of subjects. Betterton visited Paris to learn about French stage production techniques, at Charles II's expense, and returned home with a clear idea of what needed doing to raise London standards to the same level.

In 1682 the King's and Duke's companies merged and Betterton took charge of the 'United Company'. He restructured its operations and worked to turn the monopoly situation in which he now found himself to creative as well as personal financial advantage. He became – again according to Roger North – the 'chief engineer of the stage'. Betterton had two theatre buildings available

to use but only put on shows in one at a time: regular plays in the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, and dramatick operas in the bigger and better-equipped Dorset Garden theatre, a short distance away on the north bank of the Thames near present-day Blackfriars Bridge. Performances of dramatick opera were deliberately restricted: tickets doubled in price for these special productions, and an eagerly expectant audience stumped up. The extensive technical rehearsal took place in Dorset Garden while day-to-day plays continued in Drury Lane. Betterton's efficiency meant that investment in dramatick opera was more likely to earn a return: productions grew increasingly ambitious. Political turbulence still disrupted planning (Charles II's unexpected death in 1685; the deposition of James II after three years of poorly judged rule; the 1688 revolution bringing William and Mary to power), but the company recovered after each setback.

Purcell started writing theatre music in his late teens. Through most of his twenties he prioritised work for the court, consolidating his reputation for expertise both as a composer and as a keyboard player. By 1689, when Betterton began to plan his 1690 dramatick opera offering *The Prophetess, or the History of Dioclesian*, Purcell was the obvious choice for composer. The triumphant success of *Dioclesian* led on to sequels *King Arthur* in 1691 and *The Fairy Queen* in 1692, but Purcell also wrote occasional songs and instrumental music for more than 50 less ambitious productions. The relationship with Betterton ensured Purcell's lasting fame – he became the first composer-superstar in British history – although the partnership soon came to an end.

Purcell *The Fairy Queen* 1692

In 1694 the United Company collapsed. Excessive expenditure on dramatick opera may have been a factor, but corrupt shareholder dealings behind Betterton's back were chiefly responsible. Betterton led an actors' rebellion; he and his more experienced colleagues left to set up on their own. Theatrical competition re-erupted: the financial foundations on which dramatick opera relied were radically disturbed. Purcell stayed put, a decision he might have wanted to reconsider had he lived long enough. But within a year he was dead.

A unique combination of circumstances brought the big three Betterton-Purcell dramatick operas into being. Earlier, in the court masque era, performer servants of a monarch-who-must-be-flattered lacked the expressive freedom enjoyed by Purcell and his collaborators. Before Restoration London's two theatre companies merged, intense competitive pressure kept the budgetary headroom available to producers and performers uncomfortably low. And by Handel's time, with Italian-style *opera seria* predominant in London, promoters wanting to recruit star talent had to pay for it at international market rates. *Dioclesian*, *King Arthur* and *The Fairy Queen* were remarkable but highly contingent achievements: products of an unstable theatrical ecosystem in which producer ambitions, performer egos, financial practicalities and audience expectations had reached a temporary state of balance. Shortly before Purcell's death that ecosystem collapsed.

The Fairy Queen is an adaptation of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, a play neither very frequently performed in the late 17th century, nor very well regarded ('the most insipid ridiculous play that ever I saw in my life'

wrote Samuel Pepys in his diary following a visit to see it in 1662). However, its suitability for transformation into a dramatick opera was clear to Betterton. Supernatural characters in the cast had the necessary, if fictitious, power to conjure up singing and dancing accomplices. The Pyramus and Thisbe play-within-a-play was vastly entertaining, a proven favourite with audiences for street theatre in a cut-down 'droll' version called *Bottom the Weaver*.

Work on the production ran through a number of phases: firstly, script adaptation (a revision of an available published version of Shakespeare's original script, re-ordering some of the scenes and modernising the language); then masque invention (Betterton or a hired versifying assistant wrote the lyrics that Purcell would later set); then scenery, lighting and special effects. Purcell started work on the music early in 1692, and choreographer Josias Priest started to plan the dances. Rehearsals probably began in March, during the theatre's short scheduled Easter break. Long before, a press and word-of-mouth marketing campaign had been set in motion. Rumours about the extravagant cost of the production were spread deliberately: figures differed (£2,000 in one report, £3,000 in another), but the level of expense was invariably impressive.

In the original production Titania and Oberon were played by 'little children of about eight or nine years of age act[ing] the prettiest that can be imagined' (Katharine Booth, writing to a friend after attending the premiere on 2 May 1692). The fairy dancers may well have been children too, matching the mini-queen and mini-king in height.

Betterton and Purcell worked across a wide emotional range: anger close to hatred (the warring Fairy Queen and King, reconciled only at the end); heartbreak blended with indignation (Helena: eventually things come right for her too); true love (Hermia, Lysander); drug-induced infatuation (Demetrius); and knockabout comedy (Bottom the Weaver and his partners in amateur dramatic crime). Most of these moods are reflected in the music at some point. There are sections inspiring awe (the descent of sun god Phoebus, to a flourish of trumpets and drums); laugh-out-loud numbers (Coridon and Mopsa); one that moves almost to tears (The Plaint); and many a moment of pure magic ('Hush, no more').

At this distance the 1692 production process can be reconstructed only very vaguely. Surviving sources present interestingly different versions both of the play-text and of Purcell's music. The original concept evolved during planning and rehearsal stages, demonstrably. The script, the score and the choreography were adjusted for optimal flow, and further adapted for a tidy fit round scene changes happening in full view of the audience. *The Fairy Queen* was a site-specific piece in other words, designed for a particular theatre and not satisfactorily performable elsewhere, then or now, without fresh creative input from artists with vision and imagination of their own. Historical source-based authenticity pushed too far tends to prevent that happening. Functional authenticity has to be the goal, making the show, or just its music, work to best effect in a modern theatre, in concert or – as here – on CD.

Andrew Pinnock

THE FAIRY QUEEN RESTOR'D

Restoration dramatick opera is notoriously difficult to present in concert or on disc; Purcell's music was just one component of an art form which also fused drama, dance and lavish theatrical effects. The performing edition created for this recording reflects a desire to fashion a version which offers a convincing musical narrative, despite the music being dislocated from much of its original theatrical context.

Gabrieli have been performing music from *The Fairy Queen* for almost a quarter of a century and much of our mutual interpretation and performance practice has evolved slowly during that time. Some of it has been preserved in our parts; the many scorings-out, insertions and excisions bearing witness to constant reappraisal. More significantly, much has become internalised through our performances; for example, our feeling for structure, tempo and rhythmic alteration. The artefacts which have survived from the original productions, including wordbooks, musical manuscripts and prints, contemporary descriptions and, of course, the instruments themselves, have to be understood through our own knowledge of musical and theatrical practices and, indeed, interpreted with a degree of intuition. This brief note attempts to elucidate some of the creative tensions between a critical examination of remaining sources and our collective experience as modern-day performers of Purcell.

The extant musical and literary sources for *The Fairy Queen*, which have received substantial scholarly attention, include the only surviving theatrical manuscript to contain fragments in Purcell's hand, now housed in the library of the Royal Academy of Music. This is a complicated document in the hands of Purcell and four scribes of varying musical ability, one of whom copied the overture after the composer's death. It is, however, a score which was created in close proximity to performance; the copyist cautions 'turn over quietly' before Hymen's concluding stanza 'My torch, indeed' during the Act v masque. The manuscript is an invaluable record of the compositional, rehearsal and performance practices of Purcell and the United Company.

In spite of the surprising survival of such a close source, there are still many questions of interpretation, including those of form and structure. The theatre score contains several blank pages where titles remain, but no music; these songs and dances, often cued in the wordbook, never made it into the score, but can be supplied from other sources and later printed collections. 'The Plaint', for example, is only to be found in the posthumous collection *Orpheus Britannicus*. The 'Dance for the Haymakers' is only partially preserved and lacks the two inner parts, here reconstructed by Christopher Suckling. As with *King Arthur*, there are also discrepancies in matters of detail between different versions of songs and dances. As always, editors and performers have to make decisions on ornamentation, repeat schemes and even instrumentation. This recording does not attempt to reproduce an 'Urtext' version of *The Fairy Queen* of 1692 or 1693, which remains intangible, even if desirable; rather it is a creative response to the surviving material and much scholarly discussion from both musicologists and theatre historians over recent decades.

Unlike the tightly integrated music and drama of *King Arthur*, the music from *The Fairy Queen* lies largely in the masques which conclude the acts. This may be related to the reworking and casting of Shakespeare's play; Michael Burden has suggested that the use of child actors to play Oberon and Titania might have encouraged the sung scenes to be more dissociated from the spoken parts. Unlike *King Arthur*, none of the speaking roles is required to sing. A concert performance or recording of the music from *The Fairy Queen* thus requires less realignment than the music from *King Arthur*. All the same, 'The Plaint', probably inserted after the 1692 performances, does very little to advance the Act v masque and, in concert, this much-loved song has worked better as an interlude between Acts iv and v. Similarly, the Act v Chaconne, shorn of the choreography and stagecraft that creates a cohesive theatrical narrative to the surrounding scene, is placed after the final chorus.

There is no consistent convention for showing the repetition of a line of music. In certain songs, the wordbook may suggest that the librettist, at the very least, considered that the structure of the verse should follow a certain pattern, but this can be explicitly contradicted in Purcell's setting. Furthermore, many of the musical sources are both internally inconsistent and contradictory. We suspect that some songs and choruses are notated in a shorthand that would have been expanded by copyists and performers in the process of rehearsal and performance. This supposition is supported by inconsistencies between solo and chorus sections in 'If love's a sweet passion'. Rhythmic differences between sung and played music also evaporate if the manuscript is treated as a structural shorthand. This offered a possible framework through which to explore many issues. Our decisions have fluctuated over the years, eventually reaching, we hope, an equilibrium between theatrical understanding and musical form.

Beyond such matters of structure, the editorial process was less prescriptive. Questions of rhythm, articulation and even pitches, which in a traditional scholarly edition might be considered to be of importance, frequently fall within the range of historical possibility. Purcell's own copies of songs from *The Fairy Queen*, perhaps made for private concerts at court, show several alternative readings of decorative passages. Our singers, like Purcell's, would naturally grace their lines with rhythmic alterations and melodic extemporisation. A critical decision on which textual variant was 'correct' was rendered moot.

There were several concurrent pitch standards in Purcell's London; a high chapel pitch (around A=473 Hz) and a lower theatre pitch, a little above A=400 Hz. For practical reasons, we have had to choose a slightly lower pitch of A=392 Hz, which works well for the voice types idiomatic to Restoration theatre, notably the use of high tenors (as opposed to falsettists) to sing the 'countertenor' line.

The final aspect of the performance considered through the edition was the instrumentation of the music. It is easy to overlook the incredible development of the ensemble in Purcell's theatre scores. Purcell, alongside Blow and Finger, refined the practices of their predecessors, notably Matthew Locke, and created

some of the earliest English theatre music to use the full 'baroque' orchestra of strings, wind, trumpets and drums. This was, however, a very different ensemble from the Handelian orchestra heard only a few years later in London. Purcell's band rarely accompanied song; it supported the choruses and provided incidental music and dances. Famously, *The Fairy Queen* was advertised in 1692 as joining the 'Delicacy and Beauty of the Italian way, [with] the Graces and Gayety of the French'. Purcell's instrumental writing shows a further development from the French-influenced scores of *Dioclesian* and *King Arthur*, expanding the obbligato writing, notably for oboes and trumpets. The former, still relative newcomers in the ensemble, have more extensive music; although unspecified, the instrumental line in 'The Plaint' is almost certainly one of the first oboe solos in theatre music. The trumpet parts employ a hitherto unknown level of sophistication, and there is also a flamboyant drum part in the Act IV masque.

The spaces available for musical performance in the Dorset Garden theatre have also influenced our decisions. A small 'music-room' was situated above the proscenium arch and this is where we assume the main band played, although it seems probable that the continuo instruments were placed at stage level nearer the singers. Stage directions in the wordbooks, however, suggest that musicians could be located in every part of the stage, and were often integrated into the action. Although *The Fairy Queen* contains fewer cues for stage music than *King Arthur*, the birds and echoes of Act II appear particularly suited to the flexibility of the Dorset Garden theatre.

Perhaps most noticeable throughout this recording is the relationship between the string band and the continuo. The four-part string writing is realised by four equal groups of three violins (first, second, tenor and bass); the bass violin is tuned from low B flat, a tone lower than the modern cello. The 16' double bass instrument was rarely, if ever, heard in Purcell's string ensemble. The resulting balance, the completeness of the harmonies, and the equivalence of Purcell's part-writing seem to encourage the French practice of playing the dance movements without the support of continuo instruments. The 1685 printed score of Grabu's *Albion and Albanius* also suggests this practice was current in Restoration theatre. Conversely, Purcell's song accompaniments demand a transparency of support. Harpsichord, theorbos and guitars accompany the songs alone and as a group, without the addition of a bowed stringed instrument on the bassline.

Ultimately, the musical sources of *The Fairy Queen* bear witness to the flexibility of form and structure, composition and performance practice inherent in Restoration theatre; whilst research has been a fascinating exercise, there remains much which is tantalisingly unsolvable.

Paul McCreesh & Christopher Suckling

'Music consists in Concords & Discords' was John Blow's elegant summary for 'basso continuo' players in his little treatise from the mid 17th century. Blow, Purcell's teacher, writes clearly on the art of improvised accompaniment; however, his brilliant pupil has left us nothing other than the music itself.

The sources for *King Arthur* and *The Fairy Queen* are mostly lacking in the bassline figures which are often provided to guide continuo players, but the art of improvising an accompaniment above a bassline is informed by very much more than figures, missing or otherwise. Purcell's supreme word-setting always gives dramatic arc to the text and often suggests a detailed emotional picture of each character and interaction. Such conflicts and delights – the 17th-century *passions* – are reflected by the sequence of concords and discords of the underlying harmonies; if a chord is unresolved, so is the emotion. The delicate balance of supporting, inspiring, but never detracting from a singer, is the essence of the continuo player's art; a complex web spun from an infinite variety of harmony, chord shapes, counter-melodies and rhythmic motifs.

Paula Chateauneuf and I spent many intense hours on these works, analysing much of Purcell's other music. We aimed to construct harmonic sequences and realisations which felt true to both the beauty of the moment and the dramatic situation, as well as to the particular nuances of each singer. Our final challenge, one unknown to Blow or Purcell, was to keep our harpsichord, theorbo and guitar realisations reasonably consistent for multiple recording takes.

Jan Waterfield

Roger North described Charlotte Butler's portrayal of Cupid in the original production of *King Arthur* in May 1691, as 'beyond anything I ever heard upon the English stage' – high praise indeed from a writer now commonly regarded as the first English music critic. Mrs Butler, then aged around 30, was also praised by the actor/manager Colley Cibber: 'she prov'd not only a good Actress, but was allow'd in those Days to sing and dance to great Perfection'. It seems she broke with certain theatrical traditions, allowing herself the freedom to present her back to the audience, and opening her mouth wide enough to be audible, having 'no concern for her face'.

If, as it seems, Mrs Butler really wasn't supposed to open her mouth wide whilst facing the audience, I do wonder how much of Dryden's text was heard by Restoration audiences; and yet, paradoxically, we know singers and actors were of course expected to have a high degree of concern for the delivery of the words. The songs in Purcell's theatre music range from the folk-like melodic simplicity of 'Fairest Isle' in *King Arthur*, to the extended 'operatic' scena in *The Fairy Queen*, 'Ye gentle spirits of the air' with its expressive rhetorical wordplay. According to designations given in *Some Select Songs, as they are sung in The Fairy Queen* (1692) Mrs Butler also sang in *The Fairy Queen*, alongside two very young sopranos: Mary Dyer and a Mrs Alyff (or Aliff), one of Purcell's more frequently used theatre singers, both likely to have been in their late teens. Mary Dyer later had some success in singing the role of Mopsa, though it was more usually performed as a 'drag' act.

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To sing *The Fairy Queen* at the lower theatre pitches known to Mrs Butler certainly helps us to declaim the text expressively. Even with all the advances in vocal training and scientific research into voice production, it is still challenging to deliver the highly florid coloratura with clarity, to gauge the optimum air pressure for the slow songs, to express the beauty of the text and to navigate the sometimes awkwardly angular passages, all whilst allowing freedom to embellish the line when appropriate. Although such is the complexity of Purcell's vocal writing, ornamentation seems best applied with discretion.

It is possibly reassuring that differences of opinion on vocal style are not just a 21st-century concern. Here is Pier Francesco Tosi, a contemporary of Roger North, telling us singers how *not* to do it in his *Observations on the florid song*, 1723:

'There are some who sing recitative on the Stage like That of the Church or Chamber: some in a perpetual Chanting, which is insufferable; some over-do it and make it a Barking; some whisper it, and some sing it confusedly; some force out the last Syllable, and some sink it; some sing it blust'ring, and some as if they were thinking of something else; some in a languishing manner; others in a Hurry; some sing it through the Teeth, and others with Affectation; some do not pronounce the Words, and others do not express them; some sing it as if laughing, and some crying; some speak it, and some hiss it; some hallow, bellow and sing it out of Tune; and, together with their offences against Nature, are guilty of the greatest Fault, in thinking themselves above Correction.'

Mhairi Lawson

PURCELL'S STRING BAND

Even after several thriving decades of period instrument performance, Purcell's music still poses many significant questions. Both editions and contemporary performances can often seem replete with too many compromises; in preparing for this recording, the string players of Gabrieli wanted to try to resolve a few of these dilemmas.

An important change in our Purcell interpretation began as far back as 1999, when Oliver Webber published his research into historical stringing, encouraging Gabrieli to explore the use of all-gut, unwound strings, set up in a system of equal tension across the four strings. We first incorporated this approach across the ensemble when performing *The Fairy Queen* at the BBC Proms in 2005. This opened up a new world of tonal possibilities: the sound was transformed, as one might expect, but blend and articulation also altered radically. These changes both informed and confirmed many of our instinctive feelings about Purcell's music.

For this recording, we wanted to pursue the practical application of our scholarship yet further, exploring a different kind of bow-hold widely used throughout Europe in the 17th and early 18th centuries. This is known (perhaps confusingly) as the 'French' bow-hold, in which the thumb is placed on the hair of the bow rather than on the wooden stick. We started to experiment with this new technique in a series of workshops in 2015. The way the bow is held is such a fundamental aspect of string technique that any change has far-reaching consequences: the impact on sound and articulation is profound, especially when used in tandem with Lully's 'rule of down bow', requiring frequent lifting and retaking of the bow. Both the 'French' bow-hold and Lully's 'rule of down bow' are described by John Lenton, a member of Purcell's court violin band in the 1680s, so we know them to be suitable for this repertoire.

The bass violin existed in a far greater variety of shapes and sizes than its modern descendant, the cello; the scant surviving iconography suggests that it may also have been played with a 'French' violin bow-hold, perhaps consistent with the many French musicians arriving in England during the 1680s.

It is rare for ensembles to adopt such challenging new playing techniques, and with such dedication to realising the letter of our scholarship. We believe this is the first time these works have been recorded using these important historical techniques. The result of this style of bowing in the hands of experts was described by Georg Muffat, in his *Florilegium Secundum*, 1698:

'The greatest skill of the Lullists lies in the fact that even with so many repeated down-bows, nothing unpleasant is heard, but rather that they wondrously combine a long line with practised dexterity … and lively playing with an extraordinarily delicate beauty.'

Catherine Martin & Oliver Webber

Purcell *The Fairy Queen* 1692

PURCELL'S TRUMPETS

Throughout most of the 17th century, the trumpet was a symbol of power, associated with rank and the rule of law. Its primary function was to give commands, either in battle or at state ceremonies. In England, three men were largely responsible for the emergence of the trumpet from the battlements and into art music: William Bull, an outstanding trumpeter and trumpet-maker; John Shore, another trumpeter renowned for extraordinary technical prowess; and Henry Purcell himself.

William Bull accompanied William of Orange on his voyage to Holland in 1690 in a band comprising 43 musicians, which also included trumpeters Matthias Shore and his sons William and John. In the 1680s, James Talbot, professor of Hebrew at Trinity College, Cambridge visited John Shore and other well-known members of Purcell's orchestra to study and measure their instruments. Bull provided the dimensions of the brass instruments: his trumpets show not only technical advancements in construction, but also a substantial development in decorative sophistication, establishing a model for the state trumpet which remained virtually unchanged for three centuries.

Coming from an established musical family of King's Trumpeters, John Shore was the most famous trumpeter in Purcell's London. Although injury forced him to retire from trumpet-playing around 1705, his skill inspired Purcell to write in a way which had previously been unimaginable; making extensive use of melodic notes between the traditional fanfare pitches, Purcell's trumpet writing employed a hitherto unknown level of complexity.

Purcell *The Fairy Queen* 1692

The silver trumpets specially commissioned and constructed for this recording are faithful copies of an original late 17th-century Bull trumpet in the collection of Warwickshire Museums. The trumpets are played without the anachronistic fingered 'vent holes' commonly in use today, and thus the pitches can only be adjusted by skilful changing of the players' air pressure, embouchure control and lip vibration, closely imitating vocal technique. This creates a particular colour, as certain notes within the trumpet's harmonic series can only be partially adjusted towards the temperament. With the regular use of softer 'inégale' tonguing typical of the period, Purcell's trumpet writing emerges with the same newfound delicacy and finesse which must have astonished the Restoration theatre audiences. The historian Sir John Hawkins described John Shore's playing in his *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music* 1776:

'His great ingenuity and application had extended the powers of that noble instrument, too little esteemed at this day, beyond the reach of imagination, for he produced from it a tone as sweet as that of an hautboy.'

Jean-François Madeuf & Graham Nicholson

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

THE NAMES OF THE PERSONS

The Duke
Egeus, father to *Hermia*
Lysander, in love with *Hermia*
Demetrius, also in love with *Hermia*, but betrothed to *Helena*
Hermia, in love with *Lysander*
Helena, in love with *Demetrius*

THE FAIRIES

Oberon, King of the Fairies
Titania, the Queen of the Fairies
Robin Goodfellow
An *Indian boy*, a changeling in *Titania*'s care
Fairy-Spirits

THE COMEDIANS

Bottom the Weaver
Quince the Carpenter
Snug the Joiner
Flute the Bellows-mender
Snout the Tinker
Starveling the Taylor

SINGERS AND DANCERS

ACT I A Drunken Poet and Fairies
ACT II Fairy-Spirits; *Night, Mystery, Secrecy, Sleep* and their attendants
ACT III Nymphs, Fawns, Dryades, Naiades; *Coridon* and *Mopsa*, Haymakers
ACT IV *Phoebus*; *Spring*, *Summer*, *Autumn*, *Winter* and their attendants
ACT V *Juno*; Chinese men and women, *Hymen*

SYNOPSIS

ACT I The Duke upholds Egeus' complaint that his daughter, Hermia, must marry Demetrius. Hermia, however, is in love with Lysander, whilst Helena's love for Demetrius is unrequited. Lysander and Hermia elope; Helena encourages Demetrius to pursue them. The comedians prepare the play of *Pyramus and Thisbe* to celebrate whichever wedding comes to pass. Titania has quarrelled with Oberon over her affections for her changeling Indian boy. She hides with the boy in the woods and, setting fairies as sentries, bids a fairy choir to entertain them. COME, LET US LEAVE THE TOWN. They are interrupted by three drunken poets, one of whom is blindfolded by the fairies and mercilessly teased. SCENE OF THE DRUNKEN POET.

ACT II In a moonlit wood, Oberon and Titania continue to argue over their illicit love affairs and the custody of the Indian boy. Titania refuses to relinquish him and then departs. Oberon bids his companion spirit, Robin Goodfellow,

to fetch a flower, the juice of which, when dropped on Titania's sleeping eyes, will cause her to fall in love with the first living creature she sees. Oberon overhears Helena's desperate proclamations of love to Demetrius and determines to use the same juice to make Demetrius fall in love with her. Titania transforms the scene into a prospect of grottoes, arbours and delightful walks. Her fairies call firstly on the birds and then the muses to aid their revels in song and dance. COME ALL YE SONGSTERS / MAY THE GOD OF WIT INSPIRE / SING WHILE WE TRIP IT / FAIRY DANCE. Titania lies down and a masque of the night lulls her to sleep. SEE, EVEN NIGHT HERSELF IS HERE / I AM COME TO LOCK ALL FAST / ONE CHARMING NIGHT / HUSH, NO MORE / DANCE FOR THE FOLLOWERS OF NIGHT. Oberon applies the potion to Titania's eyes. Hermia and Lysander lie down at a distance and Robin Goodfellow, mistaking him for Demetrius, applies the potion to Lysander's eyes.

ACT III Helena stumbles across the sleeping Lysander, who awakes, falling in love with Helena and forsaking Hermia. The comedians' play descends into farce through the interventions of Robin Goodfellow who transforms Bottom's head into that of a donkey. Titania awakes to see Bottom and immediately falls in love. Much to his annoyance, Oberon realises Robin Goodfellow has mistaken Lysander for Demetrius. Titania transforms the scene into an enchanted lake, and her elves and fairies prepare a pageant to entertain Bottom, her newfound love. A troupe of Nymphs, Dryades, Naiades and Fawns enters. IF LOVE'S A SWEET PASSION. A symphony is played as two swans swim through the arches to the bank of the river; they are suddenly transformed into fairies, who dance. Four green savages dance an entry and frighten the fairies away. SYMPHONY WHILE THE SWANS COME FORWARD / DANCE FOR THE FAIRIES / DANCE FOR THE GREEN MEN. Then follow several songs celebrating love in its many forms. YE GENTLE SPIRITS OF THE AIR / DIALOGUE OF CORIDON AND MOPSA / WHEN I HAVE OFTEN HEARD YOUNG MAIDS COMPLAINING. All then sing of the strange but happy couple and their charmed lives. A THOUSAND, THOUSAND WAYS.

ACT IV Oberon and Robin Goodfellow begin to resolve the various romantic entanglements. Oberon takes advantage of Titania's delusion to reclaim the Indian boy. They are now reconciled and Titania calls for music to celebrate their reunion. An extended symphony plays while the sun rises through mists and vapours, and an elaborate scene is perfectly revealed: in the middle of the stage, replete with marble columns and gilded statues, cypress trees, bowers and cascades, is a splendid fountain, from which water rises about 12 feet. The four seasons enter, with several attendants, who now celebrate Oberon's birthday. NOW THE NIGHT IS CHAS'D AWAY. They then announce the arrival of the sun god Phoebus. LET THE FIFES AND THE CLARIONS. Phoebus appears in a chariot drawn by four horses, with clouds breaking around it; he sings of his omnipotence over the natural world. WHEN A CRUEL LONG WINTER. The entire assembly celebrates Phoebus in a great paean. HAIL! GREAT PARENT OF US ALL.

Each season pays homage. THUS THE EVER GRATEFUL SPRING / HERE'S THE SUMMER / SEE MY MANY COLOUR'D FIELDS / NEXT, WINTER COMES SLOWLY. Following the masque, Robin Goodfellow finally manages to unite Lysander and Hermia.

ACT V The Duke, on seeing the pairs of lovers now happily united, overrules Egeus and arranges for the couples to marry. On the way to the Temple for the wedding ceremony, Oberon conjures up more effects to convince a somewhat incredulous Duke. Juno appears in another stage machine, drawn by peacocks, whose tail feathers spread into the middle of the theatre. THRICE HAPPY LOVERS. Oberon darkens the stage for another fairy dance, after which the scene is suddenly illuminated, revealing a transparent prospect of a magnificent Chinese garden. Chinese men and women enter during a symphony, and sing of their joyful lives. THUS THE GLOOMY WORLD / THUS HAPPY AND FREE. A Chinese man sings a love song. YES, DAPHNE. Six monkeys enter from between the trees and dance. Two women attempt to rouse a reluctant Hymen, God of Marriage, to bless the couples. HARK HOW ALL THINGS WITH ONE SOUND REJOICE / HARK THE ECHOING AIR / SURE THE DULL GOD OF MARRIAGE. Hymen at last appears and, impressed by the spectacular surroundings, agrees to lead the nuptial celebrations with a pageant of song and dance. SEE, I OBEY / THEY SHALL BE AS HAPPY AS THEY'RE FAIR / DANCE FOR CHINESE MAN & WOMAN.

Paul McCreesh & Christopher Suckling

Purcell *The Fairy Queen* 1692

CD I THE FAIRY QUEEN

FIRST MUSIC
1 PRELUDE
2 HORNPIPE

SECOND MUSIC
3 AIR
4 RONDEAU

OVERTURE
5 OVERTURE

ACT I
6 SOPRANO & BASS

Come, come, come, let us leave the town
And in some lonely place,
Where crowds and noise were never known,
Resolve to spend our days.

In pleasant shades upon the grass
At night ourselves we'll lay;
Our days in harmless sport shall pass,
Thus time shall slide away.

7 SCENE OF THE DRUNKEN POET

POET

Fill up the bowl, then, fill up the bowl...

1ST FAIRY & CHORUS

Trip it, trip it in a ring;
Around this mortal dance, and sing.

POET

Enough, enough,
We must play at blind man's buff.
Turn me round, and stand away,
I'll catch whom I may.

2ND FAIRY & CHORUS

About him go, so, so, so,
Pinch the wretch from top to toe;
Pinch him forty, forty times,
Pinch till he confess his crimes.

POET

Hold, you damn'd tormenting punk,
I do confess...

1ST & 2ND FAIRIES

What, what?

POET

I'm drunk, as I live boys, drunk.

1ST & 2ND FAIRIES

What art thou, speak?

POET

If you will know it,
I am a scurvy poet.

CHORUS

Pinch him, pinch him for his crimes,
His nonsense, and his dogrel rhymes.

POET

Hold! Oh! Oh! Oh!

1ST & 2ND FAIRIES

Confess more, more!

POET

I confess, I'm very poor.
Nay, prithee do not pinch me so,
Good dear devil, let me go;
And as I hope to wear the bays,
I'll write a sonnet in thy praise.

CHORUS

Drive 'im hence, away, away,
Let 'im sleep till break of day.

8 FIRST ACT TUNE – Air

ACT II

9 HIGH TENOR

Come all ye songsters of the sky,
Wake, and assemble in this wood;
But no ill-boding bird be nigh,
No none but the harmless and the good.

10 SYMPHONY IN IMITATION OF BIRDS

11 HIGH TENOR, TENOR & BASS

May the God of Wit inspire,
The Sacred Nine to bear a part;
And the blessed heav'nly choir,
Shew the utmost of their art.
While Echo shall in sounds remote,
Repeat each note, each note, each note.

12 SYMPHONY IN IMITATION OF AN ECHO

13 CHORUS

Now join your warbling voices all.

14 FAIRY, CHORUS & DANCE

Sing while we trip it upon the green;
But no ill vapours rise or fall,
No, nothing offend our Fairy Queen.

15 NIGHT

See, even Night herself is here,
To favour your design;
And all her peaceful train is near,
That men to sleep incline.
Let noise and care,
Doubt and despair,
Envy and spite
(the fiends' delight)
Be ever banish'd hence.
Let soft repose,
Her eyelids close;
And murmuring streams,
Bring pleasing dreams;
Let nothing stay to give offence.

16 MYSTERY

I am come to lock all fast,
Love without me cannot last.
Love, like counsels of the wise,
Must be hid from vulgar eyes.
'Tis holy, and we must conceal it;
They profane it, who reveal it.

17 SECRECY

One charming night
Gives more delight,
Than a hundred lucky days.
Night and I improve the taste,
Make the pleasure longer last,
A thousand thousand several ways.

18 SLEEP & CHORUS

Hush, no more, be silent all,
Sweet repose has closed her eyes.
Soft as feather'd snow does fall!
Softly, softly, steal from hence.
No noise disturb her sleeping sense.

19 DANCE FOR THE FOLLOWERS OF NIGHT

20 SECOND ACT TUNE – Air

ACT III 21 NYMPH & CHORUS

If love's a sweet passion, why does it torment?
If a bitter, oh tell me, whence comes my content?
Since I suffer with pleasure, why should I complain,
Or grieve at my fate, when I know 'tis in vain?
Yet so pleasing the pain is, so soft is the dart,
That at once it both wounds me, and tickles my heart.

FAWN & CHORUS

I press her hand gently, look languishing down,
And by passionate silence I make my love known.
But oh! how I'm blest when so kind she does prove,
By some willing mistake to discover her love.
When in striving to hide, she reveals all her flame,
And our eyes tell each other, what neither dares name.

22 SYMPHONY WHILE THE SWANS COME FORWARD

23 DANCE FOR THE FAIRIES

24 DANCE FOR THE GREEN MEN

25 NYMPH

Ye gentle spirits of the air, appear!
Prepare, and join your tender voices here.

Catch, and repeat the trembling sounds anew,
Soft as her sighs, and sweet as pearly dew,
Run new divisions, and such measure keep,
As when you lull the God of Love asleep.

Ye gentle spirits...

26 DIALOGUE OF CORIDON AND MOPSA

CORIDON

Now the maids and the men are making of hay,
We've left the dull fools, and are stol'n away.
Then Mopsa no more
Be coy as before,
But let's merrily play,
And kiss the sweet time away.

MOPSA

Why, how now, Sir Clown,
What makes you so bold?
I'd have ye to know
I'm not made of that mould.

I tell you again, again and again,
Maids must never kiss no men.
No, no, no, no, no, no kissing at all;
I'll not kiss, till I kiss you for good and all.

CORIDON

Not kiss you at all?

MOPSA

No, no, no, no, no, no kissing at all;
I'll not kiss, till I kiss you for good and all.

CORIDON

Should you give me a score,
'Twould not lessen your store,
Then bid me cheerfully kiss
And take my fill of your bliss.

MOPSA

I'll not trust you so far,
I know you too well;
Should I give you an inch,
You'd soon take an ell.

Then lordlike you rule,
And laugh at the fool.
No, no, no, no, no, no kissing at all;
I'll not kiss, till I kiss you for good and all.

CORIDON

So small a request,
You must not, you cannot,
You shall not deny,
Nor will I admit of another reply.

MOPSA

Nay, what do you mean?
O fie, fie, fie, fie!

27 DANCE FOR THE HAYMAKERS

28 NYMPH

When I have often heard young maids complaining,
That when men promise most they most deceive,
Then I thought none of them worthy my gaining;
And what they swore, I would never believe.

But when so humbly one made his addresses,
With looks so soft, and with language so kind,
I thought it sin to refuse his caresses;
Nature o'ercame, and I soon chang'd my mind.

Should he employ all his wit in deceiving,
Stretch his invention, and artfully feign;
I find such charms, such true joy in believing,
I'll have the pleasure, let him have the pain.
If he proves perjur'd, I shall not be cheated,
He may deceive himself, but never me;
'Tis what I look for, and shan't be defeated,
For I'll be as false and inconstant as he.

29 HIGH TENOR & CHORUS

A thousand, thousand ways we'll find
To entertain the hours;
No two shall e'er be known so kind,
No life so blest as ours.

30 THIRD ACT TUNE – Hornpipe

CD 2 ACT IV

1 SYMPHONY

2 1ST ATTENDANT & CHORUS

Now the night is chas'd away,
All salute the rising sun;
'Tis that happy, happy day,
The birthday of King Oberon.

3 2ND & 3RD ATTENDANT

Let the fifes and the clarions, and shrill trumpets sound,
And the arch of high heav'n the clangour resound.

4 SYMPHONY FOR THE ENTRY OF PHOEBUS

5 PHOEBUS

When a cruel long winter has frozen the earth,
And Nature imprison'd seeks in vain to be free;
I dart forth my beams, to give all things a birth,
Making spring for the plants, every flower, and each tree.
'Tis I who give life, warmth, and vigour to all,
Even Love, who rules all things in earth, air and sea,
Would languish, and fade, and to nothing would fall.
The world to its chaos would return, but for me.

6 CHORUS

Hail! Great parent of us all,
Light and comfort of the earth;
Before your shrine the seasons fall,
Thou who giv'st all Nature birth.

7 SPRING

Thus the ever grateful Spring,
Does her yearly tribute bring;
All your sweets before him lay,
Then round his altar sing, and play.

8 SUMMER

Here's the Summer, sprightly, gay,
Smiling, wanton, fresh and fair;
Adorn'd with all the flowers of May,
Whose various sweets perfume the air.

9 AUTUMN

See my many colour'd fields
And loaded trees my will obey;
All the fruit that Autumn yields,
I offer to the God of Day.

10 WINTER

Next, Winter comes slowly,
Pale, meagre, and old,
First trembling with age,
And then quiv'ring with cold;
Benumb'd with hard frosts,
And with snow cover'd o'er,
Prays the sun to restore him,
And sings as before.

11 CHORUS

Hail! Great parent of us all,
Light and comfort of the earth;
Before your shrine the seasons fall,
Thou who giv'st all Nature birth.

12 FOURTH ACT TUNE – Air

INTERLUDE 13 THE PLAINT

O let me weep, for ever weep,
My eyes no more shall welcome sleep;
I'll hide me from the sight of day,
And sigh, and sigh my soul away.
He's gone, he's gone, his loss deplore;
And I shall never see him more.

ACT V 14 JUNO

Thrice happy lovers, may you be
For ever, ever free
From that tormenting devil, jealousy.
From all the anxious care and strife,
That attends a married life.

Be to one another true,
Kind to her as she's to you.
And since the errors of the night are past,
May he be ever constant, she be ever chaste.

15 ENTRY DANCE

16 SYMPHONY

17 CHINESE MAN

Thus, the gloomy world
At first began to shine,
And from the power divine
A glory round about it hurled;
Which made it bright,
And gave it birth in light.

Then were all minds as pure,
As those ethereal streams;
In innocence secure,
Not subject to extremes.
There was no room then for empty fame,
No cause for pride, ambition wanted aim.

Thus, the gloomy world…

18 CHINESE WOMAN & CHORUS

Thus happy and free,
Thus treated are we
With Nature's chiefest delights;
We never cloy,
But renew our joy,
And one bliss another invites.

Thus wildly we live,
Thus freely we give,
What Heav'n as freely bestows.
We were not made
For labour or trade,
Which fools on each other impose.

19 CHINESE MAN

Yes, Daphne, in your face I find
Those charms by which my heart's betray'd;
Then let not your disdain unbind
The prisoner that your eyes have made.
She that in love makes least defence,
Wounds ever with the surest dart;
Beauty may captivate the sense,
But kindness only gains the heart.

20 DANCE FOR THE MONKEYS

21 2ND WOMAN

Hark how all things with one sound rejoice,
And the world seems to have one voice.

22 1ST WOMAN

Hark the echoing air a triumph sings,
And all around pleas'd cupids clap their wings.

CHORUS

Hark! Hark!

23 1ST & 2ND WOMEN

Sure the dull God of Marriage does not hear;
We'll rouse him with a charm.

1ST & 2ND WOMEN & CHORUS

Hymen appear!
Our Queen of Night commands thee not to stay.

24 PRELUDE AS HYMEN ENTERS

25 HYMEN

See, I obey.
My torch has long been out, I hate
On loose dissembled vows to wait,
Where hardly love outlives the wedding night;
False flames, love's meteors, yield my torch no light.

1ST & 2ND WOMEN

Turn then thine eyes upon those glories here,
And catching flames will on thy torch appear.

HYMEN

My torch, indeed, will from such brightness shine:
Love ne'er had yet such altars so divine.

26 1ST & 2ND WOMEN, HYMEN & CHORUS

They shall be as happy as they're fair;
Love shall fill all the places of care.
And every time the sun shall display
His rising light,
It shall be to them a new wedding day,
And when he sets, a new nuptial night.

27 DANCE FOR CHINESE MAN & WOMAN – Chaconne

GABRIELI CONSORT & PLAYERS

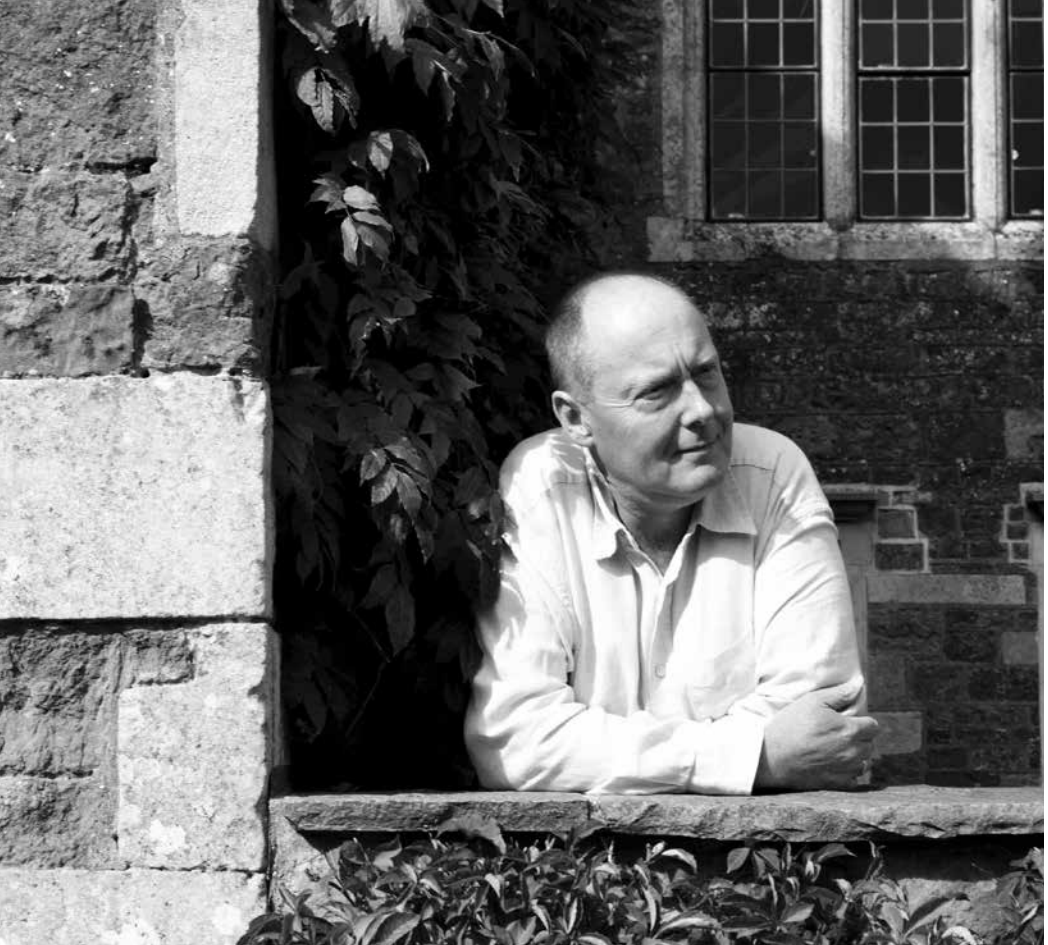
Gabrieli are world-renowned interpreters of great vocal and instrumental repertoire, from the Renaissance to the present day. Founded by Paul McCreesh in 1982, Gabrieli have both outgrown and remained true to their original identity: whilst the ensemble's repertoire has expanded beyond any expectation, McCreesh's ever-questioning spirit, expressive musicianship and a healthy degree of iconoclasm remain constant and are reflected in the ensemble's dynamic performances. Gabrieli's repertoire includes major works of the oratorio tradition, virtuosic *a cappella* programmes and mould-breaking reconstructions of music for historical events. Above all, Gabrieli aims to create thought-provoking performances which stand out from the crowd.

A number of strong relationships have defined Gabrieli's international profile over many years and such partnerships remain at the heart of our activities. For over 15 years, in conjunction with Martin Randall Travel, we have pioneered new areas of 'cultural tourism', collaborating to create festivals of music in European historic centres, developing new programmes specifically inspired by the exquisite buildings and cities in which they are performed. Gabrieli were resident artists at Brinkburn Music in Northumberland, with whom we developed some of our most exciting projects over 20 years. From 2006 to 2012 we were associate artists of the Wratislavia Cantans Festival, and subsequently embarked on an exciting partnership with the Wrocław Philharmonic Choir, now the NFM Choir, a collaboration which features strongly in some of our recent critically acclaimed oratorio recordings.

Purcell *The Fairy Queen* 1692

Gabrieli's inspirational recordings garner numerous international awards, including Gramophone Awards for recordings of Haydn's *The Creation* and *A New Venetian Coronation 1595*; BBC Music Magazine Awards for Berlioz's *Grande Messe des Morts*, Britten's *War Requiem* and the *a cappella* sequence *A Rose Magnificat*; Grammy nominations for the *a cappella* disc *A Spotless Rose* and Handel's *L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato*; and a Diapason d'or de l'année for Mendelssohn's *Elijah.* The discography on Paul McCreesh's own Winged Lion label is testament to Gabrieli's versatility and McCreesh's breadth of vision: *A Song of Farewell* (English choral repertoire from Morley and Sheppard to Howells and MacMillan); *A New Venetian Coronation 1595* (revisiting their famed 1990 recording of music by Andrea and Giovanni Gabrieli); a recreation of the first performance of Handel's *L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato*; a lively new performing edition of Purcell's *King Arthur*; and four spectacular large-scale oratorio recordings made in conjunction with the National Forum of Music, Wrocław, most recently Haydn's *The Seasons*.

Increasingly central to Gabrieli's mission is the development of Gabrieli Roar, an innovative choral training programme that challenges young singers to perform and record side-by-side with Gabrieli's renowned artists. *An English Coronation* – perhaps Gabrieli's most ambitious project to date – is a spectacular recreation of the lavish rites of the 20th century. It presents music by Elgar, Parry, Vaughan Williams, Handel, Howells and Walton on the grandest of scales, performed by more than 400 musicians, including 250 young singers from Gabrieli Roar.



Paul McCreesh is renowned for the energy and passion of his musicianship, and the interpretive insight he brings to repertoire of the widest stylistic and historical breadth. His authoritative performances are founded on uncompromising drive and vision, alongside a hunger for new challenges. First established as the founder and artistic director of the Gabrieli Consort & Players, he now conducts such orchestras as the Leipzig Gewandhaus, Bergen Philharmonic, Hong Kong Philharmonic, Sydney Symphony, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra and Verbier Festival Orchestra. He is a former Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor at the Gulbenkian Orchestra, Lisbon and served for six seasons as Artistic Director of the International Festival Wratislavia Cantans in Wrocław, Poland.

At the heart of McCreesh's music-making is a determination to broaden and democratise access to the arts. He is actively involved in developing new performing opportunities and educational initiatives across Europe, and carefully curated collaborations with youth choirs and orchestras are central to his work.

McCreesh's ever-questioning spirit makes him a difficult artist to categorise: he is as likely to be found conducting Purcell's theatre works as Elgar's symphonies or an *a cappella* part song. He is particularly known for his performances of major choral works, such as Britten's *War Requiem*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Verdi's *Requiem*, Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* and Haydn's *The Creation* and *The Seasons*. He brings to all this repertoire the same rigorous scholarship and interpretive flair that defined his early career, confirming his reputation for innovation, and making him one of today's most highly regarded recording artists.

ANNA DENNIS

Anna Dennis is a versatile, inquisitive artist, highly regarded for her interpretations of baroque and contemporary repertoire. She has created roles in operas by Francisco Coll, Jonathan Dove, Edward Rushton and Will Tuckett, and performed Thomas Adès' song-setting *Life Story* at Lincoln Center with the composer. Significant engagements include Britten's *War Requiem* at the Berlin Philharmonie, Bach cantatas with Les Violons du Roy in Montreal, the premiere of Damon Albarn's *Dr Dee* for Manchester International Festival, subsequently reprised for English National Opera and Queen of the Night in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* for Clarion Music Society, New York. Her recordings include Handel's *Siroe* and *Joshua* with FestspielOrchester Göttingen, chamber works by Elena Langer and a recital disc of Purcell songs, *Sweeter than Roses*.

MHAIRI LAWSON

Mhairi Lawson has collaborated with Gabrieli for over 20 years, performing Bach, Purcell and Handel with the ensemble across the world. She has enjoyed many projects with Les Arts Florissants, English National Opera, the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, the Early Opera Company and the Dunedin Consort and is a resident soloist at the Carmel Bach Festival in California. Her discography includes Haydn's *Creation*, Schubert Lieder, rare Vivaldi works and Scottish music both traditional and classical. Mhairi is a professor of Voice and Historical Performance at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, where she specialises in the study of primary sources relevant to late 18th- and early 19th-century vocal chamber music.

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ROWAN PIERCE

Rowan Pierce has rapidly established herself as one of today's leading young singers, having first worked with Paul McCreesh as a teenager in one of Gabrieli's young singers' projects. She came to public attention whilst at the Royal College of Music, where she won both the Major van Someren-Godfrey Prize and the President's Award, subsequently winning further prizes at the Grange Festival's inaugural Singing Competition. She is now a Harewood Artist at English National Opera, a 'Rising Star' of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and has worked with Gabrieli, the Academy of Ancient Music, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic and Scottish Chamber orchestras.

CAROLYN SAMPSON

Equally at home on the concert and opera stages, Carolyn Sampson is one of today's most highly regarded sopranos, known as an interpreter of supreme style and insight. She has enjoyed notable successes in roles such as Semele in Handel's *Semele*, Pamina in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, Anne Trulove in Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* and Mélisande in Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*. She enjoys close relationships with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Freiburg Baroque Orchestra and Bach Collegium Japan and appears frequently with leading symphony orchestras worldwide. A committed recitalist, she has appeared regularly at Wigmore Hall, Amsterdam Concertgebouw and at the Aldeburgh Festival. Her recordings have earned her numerous accolades, including the recital award in the 2015 Gramophone Awards and a Diapason d'or de l'année.

JEREMY BUDD

Jeremy Budd is particularly known for his agile, crystal-clear high tenor voice, which makes him an ideal performer of Purcell's music, especially the high-lying 'countertenor' roles which he has performed widely with Gabrieli and many of the world's leading baroque ensembles. He works extensively in opera houses where he has sung the title role in Monteverdi's *Orfeo* for Opéra de Lille, Pilade in Handel's *Oreste* at the Royal Opera House's Linbury Theatre and Chabrier's *L'Etoile* at the Opéra Comique in Paris. His recordings include Handel's *Acis and Galatea* and Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610* with The Sixteen.

CHARLES DANIELS

Born in Salisbury, Charles Daniels received his musical training at King's College, Cambridge and London's Royal College of Music. His long career has taken him all over the world and he features on well over 100 recordings. His repertoire is exceptionally wide, encompassing music from the ninth century to the present day, but he is perhaps best known for his work as soloist and consort singer with many of the most renowned ensembles in the field of historically informed performance. He has worked frequently with Andrew Parrott and the Taverner Consort, with whom he has recorded the title role in Monteverdi's *Orfeo*, and his work with Gabrieli likewise goes back several decades, including recordings of Monteverdi, Purcell, Bach and Handel's *Messiah*. He is also an acclaimed Evangelist in Bach's *Passions*.

JAMES WAY

A music graduate of King's College, London, James Way continued his studies at Guildhall School of Music and Drama and won Second Prize in the 62nd Kathleen Ferrier Awards at Wigmore Hall in 2017. He is a former Britten-Pears Young Artist, a laureate of Les Arts Florissants' young artist programme Le Jardin des Voix and was an inaugural 'Rising Star' of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. In addition to his varied concert work, his opera performances have included roles such as Holy Fool in Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov*, the Ballad Singer in Britten's *Owen Wingrave*, Davy in Roxanna Panufnik's *Silver Birch* and Sellem in Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*.

RODERICK WILLIAMS

Roderick Williams is one of the most sought-after baritones of his generation, in demand on the opera stage and in the concert hall for the widest of repertoires. He sings major roles such as Papageno in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, Don Alfonso in Mozart's *Così fan tutte*, the title roles in Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* and Britten's *Billy Budd*, and has premiered roles in operas by David Sawer, Sally Beamish and Michel van der Aa. He was awarded an OBE in June 2017 and was nominated for Olivier Awards in both 2018 and 2019, for his performances in the title role of Monteverdi's *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* and in the English National Opera production of Britten's *War Requiem*. Increasingly well known as a composer, he won the prize for Best Choral Composition at the 2016 British Composer Awards.

ASHLEY RICHES

An English graduate of King's College, Cambridge, where he sang in the acclaimed choir, Ashley Riches is a former Jette Parker Young Artist at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden and member of the BBC New Generation Artist Scheme. He now sings at leading opera houses, in such roles as Marcello and Schaunard in Puccini's *La bohème*, the title roles in Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* and Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, Demetrius in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Claudio in Handel's *Agrippina*. His discography includes Bach's *St John Passion* with the Academy of Ancient Music, Bernstein's *Wonderful Town* with the London Symphony Orchestra and Poulenc's song cycle *Chansons gaillardes*.

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SOPRANO
Anna Dennis
Mhairi Lawson
Rowan Pierce
Carolyn Sampson

HIGH TENOR
Jeremy Budd
Christopher Fitzgerald Lombard

TENOR
Charles Daniels
James Way
Tom Castle

BASS
Roderick Williams
Ashley Riches
Jimmy Holliday

VIOLIN I
Catherine Martin
Persephone Gibbs
Ruth Slater

VIOLIN II
Oliver Webber
Ellen O'Dell
Sarah Bealby Wright

VIOLA
Rachel Byrt
Stefanie Heichelheim
Julia Black

BASS VIOLIN
Christopher Suckling
Anna Holmes
Gavin Kibble

RECORDER
Rebecca Miles
Ian Wilson

OBOE
Christopher Palameta
Hannah McLaughlin

BASSOON
Zoe Shevlin

TRUMPET
Jean-François Madeuf
Graham Nicholson

DRUMS
Jude Carlton

HARPSICHORD
Jan Waterfield

THEORBO & GUITAR
Paula Chateauneuf
Fred Jacobs
Eligio Quinteiro

GABRIELI
CONSORT & PLAYERS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Recording Purcell's *The Fairy Queen* has been very much a collective enterprise, rather than a conductor-dominated performance project. It embraces the scholarship of many Gabrieli musicians, exhibiting a breadth of talent that expands far beyond technical ability and performance: Catherine Martin and Oliver Webber's research of 17th-century bowholds and continuing exploration of historical string-making techniques; Paula Chateauneuf and Jan Waterfield's exhaustive reassessment of the world of bass-figuring; and Jean-François Madeuf and Graham Nicholson's pilgrimage to Warwick to build two English trumpets specifically for the project. Likewise, I find it impossible to perform Purcell without recalling a wonderful 20-year collaboration with Timothy Roberts, former principal keyboard player at Gabrieli, whose extraordinary musicianship in this repertoire still casts a telling shadow over our performances. I am always humbled by my colleagues' enthusiasm and by their inspiring dedication.

I am grateful to Andrew Pinnock for sharing his extensive knowledge on the theatrical background to *The Fairy Queen*. Above all, it has been a particular pleasure to prepare our new performing edition with Christopher Suckling, both a fine musicologist and a long-standing performer in the ensemble. Our continually evolving discussions balanced rigorous scholarship and critical analysis with a freedom for artistic creativity in a way that is fundamentally at the heart of Gabrieli's music-making.

As with every Gabrieli recording, this release has only been possible with the investment of our loyal supporters. There is no core or grant funding available for what is – perhaps laughably – seen as the 'commercial' enterprise of recording: we are entirely reliant on the generosity of our patrons to make artistic dreams a reality, and to preserve Gabrieli's interpretations on record. I am indebted, as ever, to all those who believe in my vision and Gabrieli's zest for this repertoire, and would like to thank our principal donors Alan Gemes and John Cryan, as well as Steve Allen, Stephen Barter, Richard Brown, Jan Louis Burggraaf, Tony Henfrey, Graham Mather, Terry O'Neill, Edmund Truell and John Walton, for their long-standing support. Thanks are also due to all those who supported us through The Big Give Christmas Challenge 2018.

Finally, I am grateful to Mike Abrahams and Yvonne Eddy for their tireless patience and creativity in producing Winged Lion's booklets, to Nicholas Parker and Neil Hutchinson, as inspiring and supportive a recording team as one might ever wish for, and to my colleagues at Gabrieli, David Clegg, John McMunn, Peter Reynolds and Susie York Skinner for their work in all our endeavours.

Paul McCreesh

Paul McCreesh & Winged Lion's award-winning recordings

Purcell *King Arthur* 1691
"...choruses are more vibrant, dance rhythms more percussive and solos more delicate than in any previous recording... another jewel in McCreesh's crown." BBC Music Magazine

An English Coronation 1902-1953
"An astounding recording... sound the trumpets..." The Times

BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE AWARD 2019
A Rose Magnificat
"...an exquisitely crafted recital... McCreesh's ear for a contemporary classic is unerring." Gramophone

Silence & Music
"...a clever mixture of moods – a disc that takes the part song into the 21st century not only in repertoire but also in style." Gramophone

Haydn *The Seasons* 1801
"...McCreesh's fresh new translation animates the top-class solo singing, while the massed choruses blow the roof off. Glorious." The Observer

GRAMMY NOMINATED 2016
Handel *L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato* 1740
"...a pristine sense of style and infectious energy..." The Times

Incarnation
"...When you're on a roll, you're on a roll... bold and imaginative... genuinely challenging and different..." BBC Music Magazine

BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE AWARD 2014
Britten *War Requiem* 1962
"...the profundity and coherence of McCreesh's reading sets a new standard for this work..." BBC Music Magazine

DIAPASON D'OR DE L'ANNÉE 2013
Mendelssohn *Elijah* 1846
"...a spectacularly successful reinvention of the British choral tradition..." The Observer

GRAMOPHONE AWARD 2013
Andrea & Giovanni Gabrieli *A New Venetian Coronation* 1595
"...McCreesh's new take on his classic recording is a triumph and even more vivid than the first..." International Record Review

A Song of Farewell
"...Gorgeously melancholic... beautifully sung..." The Times

BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE AWARD 2012
Berlioz *Grande Messe des Morts* 1837
"The impact is overwhelming... McCreesh has achieved something quite out of the ordinary..." Gramophone

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